

MINUTES OF THE CRESSY LOCAL DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE CRESSY MEMORIAL HALL ON WEDNESDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2013 COMMENCING AT 7.05PM

1 PRESENT

Mrs F Cox, Mrs H Howard, Mrs H Williams, Mrs M Cables, Mr A Turnham – from 7.30pm, Mrs A Green, Mr P Goss, Mr W Chellis-Council's Works & Infrastructure Manager, Mr L Harwood-Secretary

2 APOLOGIES

Cr P Goss, Mrs A Jenkins, Mrs M Taylor

3 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

Mrs Green/Mrs Williams

That the minutes of the Cressy Local District Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 23 October 2013 be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

Carried

4 DECLARATION OF ANY PECUNIARY INTEREST BY A MEMBER OF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

In accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Part 5, S48A – S56, a member of a Special Committee must not participate in any discussion or vote on any matter in respect to which the member:

- a) has an interest; or
- b) is aware or ought to be aware that a close associate has an interest.

A member has an interest in a matter if the matter was decided in a particular manner, receive or have an expectation of receiving or likely to receive a pecuniary benefit or pecuniary detriment.

** It should be noted that any person declaring an interest is required to notify the general manager, in writing, of the details of any interest declared within 7 days of the declaration.*

It was **RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

5 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

5.1 Boat Ramp – Macquarie St, Cressy

The matter was discussed at the December Council Meeting. Listed hereunder is an extract of the Council Officer's report and minute:-

CONSTRUCTION PROPOSED OF A BOAT RAMP AT MACQUARIE STREET, CRESSY

Responsible Officer: Wayne Chellis; Works & Infrastructure Manager

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide council with an update on the action taken in regards to the request by the Cressy Local District Committee that a boat ramp be constructed at Macquarie Street, Cressy.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 CONSTRUCTION OF THE WEIR

In 1995 Council replaced the old worn out pumps in the pump station building at the end of Macquarie Street with an underground bore pump installed in a manhole on the southern side of the old building.

At the same time a small booster pump was installed at the reservoir to increase the water pressure provided to residents in the township of Cressy.

During a period of drought in 1998 the water level became so low at the pump intake in the river that the township was under threat of being without water.

Therefore Council brought this concern to the attention of Hydro Tasmania and negotiated the purchase of a number of 900mm x 900mm concrete blocks and constructed a concrete weir across the river downstream of the pump station intake as a matter of urgency. The purpose of the construction of the weir (without sketch plans or an engineering design) was to raise the level of the water by 1.8 metres in height.

The construction of the weir very quickly achieved the desired result of water being continuously available during periods of low flow in the river.

2.2 OWNERSHIP OF THE WEIR

On 1st July 2009 all council assets associated with water and sewer, including the concrete weir, were transferred into the ownership of Ben Lomond Water (now TasWater).

2.3 RIVER ACCESS

Prior to the construction of the weir there was evidence of an area that would have provided for access for a small boat to be launched into the river at low water level and following the raising of the water level the majority of that access area became covered with water. Over a period of time the so called boat ramp access into the river appears to have eroded away; however, that is difficult to determine at the level at which the river is currently flowing. During recent visits to the area it was noted

that two small boats, 2.4 metres long, were being manually launched into the river.

Following the construction of the weir council placed some large boulders on the eastern end of the turning circle to highlight the river's edge and prevent cars from driving into the river.

3 BACKGROUND

The Cressy Local District Committee have deliberated on this matter at their bi-monthly meetings held since 27 June 2012 and made the following recommendations to Council to be considered:

On 27 June 2012

Mrs Green/Mr Saltmarsh

That it be recommended to Council that the boat ramp at the end of Macquarie St, Cressy be reinstated and the parking area upgraded—other work to include the removal of the concrete dam which was installed by Council when the boat ramp was removed.

Carried

and on 24 April 2013:

Mrs Howard/Mr Goss

That it be recommended that the boat ramp at Cressy be re-instated at Council's expense.

Carried

At the 28 August 2013 Cressy Local District Committee meeting, it was noted that a meeting had been held with Mr D Bassett on 8 August 2013 at which time concerns had been raised in relation to the reopening of the boat ramp, correspondence had also been received from Mr P Darke in support of the reopening of the boat ramp. The committee discussed the concrete blocks which provide ponding for the pump. At this time the committee suggested that the blocks be retained and hazard signage installed and appropriately marked to indicate the channel. Further, the Committee requested that Council's Works & Infrastructure Manager requisition Mr Cookson to undertake a risk assessment.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) have previously advised: "MAST does not consider the site suitable for a ramp" and "MAST advises that funding for a ramp cannot be considered". It therefore appears that Council would need to fully fund the removal of the weir, construction of the boat ramp and improvements to the car parking area, which may include the relocation of the existing stormwater pipes.

5 RISK ISSUES

5.1 RISK MANAGEMENT

Council officers have a duty of care to be impartial and to report on and address all safety concerns that may arise from the building of new and the upgrading of existing infrastructure irrespective of whether or not council own the assets. Council officers are also required to consult with and seek the views of other agencies that may be affected directly, or indirectly, by the construction of an asset. Council may be held liable for supporting the construction of an asset that provides access to an area that is considered unsafe for public use which has the potential to result in an insurance claim.

Recognition of a safety concern and the installation of warning signage does not always absolve Council from liability. In fact the installation of signs, recognising there is a safety concern has at times worked in favour of claimants when making insurance claims. Council does however, at times, accept such risk for the overall good of the community.

5.2 RISK ASSESSMENT

Mr David Cookson C.P.M.S.I.A. was contracted to undertake a risk assessment and was requested to identify potential problems with the removal of the Cressy weir and establish a boat ramp, at the eastern end of Macquarie Street, Cressy.

Mr Cookson concluded:

My conclusion is that Council is not in a position to approve the development / building of a boat ramp because they do not control the area and other government departments have authority. The weir is owned and maintained by TasWater, Council should request TasWater that appropriate warning signage should be placed on both banks of the river warning boats and people of the submerged hazard and to keep more than 4 meters away etc.

The following are my recommendations

- 1/ Council write to TasWater asking them to consider establishing appropriate signage at the weir.*
- 2/ If TasWater do not respond Council consider placing signage to assist the public*
- 3/ Council place appropriate signage at the end of Macquarie Street outlining appropriate rules and identifying the hazards for small boats using the area*
- 4/ Council do not proceed with construction of a boat ramp due to an inappropriate layout for parking and the turning of vehicles with trailers.*

6 CONSULTATION

Council staff have approached a number of partner agencies including Marine & Safety Tasmania, Inland Fisheries Services, Ben Lomond Water, Hydro Tasmania and the Bureau of Meteorology in regard to this matter all of which have been met with a negative response, citing their reasons for not wishing to progress this matter; affected property owners have also been consulted. Since December 2012, two applications seeking a grant to construct a boat ramp at Cressy have been submitted to Marine & Safety Tasmania, both of which have been refused.

A risk assessment was conducted by Mr Cookson and tabled at the 23 October meeting of the Cressy Local District Committee; the Committee requested Council to seek out ways to address the issues raised in the risk assessment.

6.1 INLAND FISHERIES SERVICE (IFS)

The Inland Fisheries Service was advised of the request by the Cressy Local District Committee to construct a boat ramp at Macquarie Street, Cressy. Mr Neil Morrow agreed to meet with Council representatives, however, raised the following concerns in regard to the proposal and did not support the construction of the boat ramp:

- “As discussed the IFS has the following concerns with this proposal.*
- The site is restricted in size and is inadequate for turning and reversing of boats and trailers and parking.*
 - The river is restricted to a 5 knot speed limit which is appropriate for the vessels described above*
 - Any increase in traffic as a result of facility improvement would very likely lead to conflict between future and existing users and open up the potential for illegal and antisocial activity*
 - The impact of boating on existing recreational use including fishing would need to be carefully considered. The Macquarie River is currently the 5th most popular river fishery in Tasmania with over 1500 anglers fishing here each season. It is likely that impacts may extend to Brumbys Creek which is the 3rd most popular river fishery with 2270 anglers per season.*
 - The IFS has invested heavily in providing foot access to the river for angling. An increase in boat based anglers can impact on the shore based fishing experience*
 - The lower Macquarie is a major attraction for visiting anglers and a number of local trout guiding businesses. Any increase in boating for purposes other than passive recreation could impact adversely on tourism and employment.*
 - Safety issues associated with the in stream weir approximately 50m downstream from the proposed development*
 - Dramatic and frequent fluctuations in water flow and level change*

the nature of the river and pose a risk to safe navigation for vessels other than those currently provided for

“Based on the above the IFS concludes that the existing area in its present condition is suitable for launching of small car toppers, inflatables and canoes and is consistent with current and future use of the Macquarie River between Brumbys Creek and Woolmer’s Bridge and therefore would not support the proposal. Consultation with a number of existing users including people who use the type of vessels described above support the IFS position.”

6.2 TASWATER (previously BEN LOMOND WATER)

The following correspondence dated 14 November 2012 was sent to Mr Glen Rowlands of the then Ben Lomond Water, in which the Works & Infrastructure Manager raised concerns with the weir and noted that the removal of the weir would be a step forward in constructing a boat ramp.

“... It has recently been brought to Council’s attention that small boats are using that part of the river and the concrete blocks placed across the river pose a real danger to the users. The constant change in the flow and river level at the weir also increases the risk of a serious accident.

“Therefore I believe the concrete blocks should be removed as soon as possible .Council is prepared to assist by paying 50% of the cost of removal and cartage to Council’s depot in Hay Street, Longford on the condition that Council becomes the new owners of the concrete blocks. With your approval Council would also engage a contractor (Greg Jordon) to undertake the removal when the river level drops to a workable level.

“Approvals would need to be sought from DPIPWE, BOM, Hydro and Mr George Mills who owns the property to the centre of the river on the eastern side. The western side (pump house) is a Riparian reserve.

“I understand you may be in favour of this proposal and you will seek approval from DPIPWE and BOM. Council will seek approval from the Hydro and the property owner.

“Hoping we are able to work together to reduce the risk of a potential accident.”

6.3 BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY (BOM)

Dr Carlos Velasco, Regional Hydrology Manager, emailed Council on 19 November 2012 raising concerns with the proposal to remove the weir, which had been brought to their attention, as follows:

“I have been alerted by third parties about Northern Midlands Council’s plans to remove the ‘weir’ crossing the Macquarie River at

Cressy Pumps in a near future.

“As you know there is a Water Level station in that location that plays a critical role on the Bureau’s flood warning network for the Macquarie River.

“This station provides early advice about flooding in the lower Macquarie River to several farmers, companies and local authorities via Bureau’s River Alert service (you both are subscribed to this River Alert), and also provides valuable information for the hydrological models of Bureau’s Flood Forecast and Warning service.

“My main concern about your plans is the fact that a modification of this scale in the river conditions at Cressy Pumps will likely alter the hydraulics conditions of the Lower Macquarie River as a whole, with river levels likely to change significantly and therefore the quality of all current Flood Forecast and Warning services could be notoriously affected.

“As result of the new river behaviour following the removal of the weir, a new rating curve (flow-discharge) with sufficient ranges of flow and heights needs to be gauged and validated, all hydrological models would be re-calibrated and re-validated to reflect the new hydraulics conditions of the river, and a new River Alert level must be established and agreed with stakeholders. This review process could last years up to all performance issues have been satisfactory resolved.

“Please be aware that a direct consequence of Council’s plans to remove the weir in the Cressy Pumps is a true risk of getting poor-quality flooding predictions for the Cressy – Longford – Trevallyn Dam area for an extended period of time.

“I don’t know all details and reasons that you have had to take this decision, but I would be glad if we can discuss or at least be briefed about this matter at your earliest convenience.”

Council’s Works & Infrastructure Manager responded to Dr Carlos Velasco advising that the Cressy Local District Committee had raised concerns with Council regarding the danger the weir presents to small boat owners in particular when the river level is just above the height of the weir, therefore Council had a duty of care to bring that to the attention of TasWater the owners of the infrastructure. It was noted that during our discussion with Mr Glen Rowlands of TasWater that council would assist with the removal of the weir if approval was given and supported by all parties. Mr Rowlands advised of the need to further discuss the matter with the Bureau of Meteorology and Hydro Tasmania. Further, Council noted the weir plays a critical role in the Bureau’s flood warning network and acknowledges how critical the information is to provide early warnings regarding potential flooding and confirmed that Council would

not take any action that would compromise the collection of such data.

Dr Carlos Velasco thanked Council for the additional information and advised that:

“... My previous message only sought to call your attention (and the CLDC) to the risk of affecting the quality of the flood forecast and early warnings in the area by removing the weir.

“If CLDC considers that the danger of the weir present to small boat owners must be mitigated by taking away the weir, it is worth for them also to know that the Bureau will require a period of time to adjust the hydrological models and early warning systems to the new conditions of the river, and during that period of time unfortunately our flood predictions at Longford will likely underperform.

“If NMC, BLW and Cressy Local District Committee finally decide to remove the weir, the Bureau will work to return our forecasts to the expected quality as soon as our technical and financial restrictions let us do it.”

Further, Dr Velasco requested that Council seek the opinion of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment in regard to the removal of the weir.

6.4 HYDRO TASMANIA

Council received the following email from Mr Mark Willis, Hydrographic Data Co-ordinator, Hydro Tasmania following discussions with Ben Lomond Water:

“This is the first I have heard of the proposed boat ramp at this location and that the removal of concrete blocks was associated with this. I would recommend against placing a boat ramp at the Cressy pumps site.

“The reasons for this are as follows:

“At other locations around Tasmania where our sites have been in areas of high public access, we have found there is an increased rate of vandalism and damage from people anchoring their boat to outside level boards and instrument lines. These issues have eventually resulted in the site being unviable to operate and we have eventually closed these sites.

“Depending on power station operation the water level at the site, and the river between Woolmers bridge and Brumbys Creek, can vary over a range of about 1.3 metres over the course of a day. It is possible to launch a boat in the morning in a good flow and be stranded on the river bottom a few hours later. The existing site at Longford has few of these issues as it is located in the pool formed

by the Old Mill Dam.

“We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the proposal to install a boat ramp with Council.”

Following receipt of this email, the Works & Infrastructure Manager held further discussions with Mr Willis, who consequently advised:

“Thank you for contacting us regarding the concrete blocks in the Macquarie River at Cressy pump station. I confirm the flow monitoring this equipment is owned and run by Hydro Tasmania and the data we collect is also used by the BoM for flood warning purposes and DPIPWE for water management.

“Although it will be very inconvenient if these blocks were removed the issues are not insurmountable. It will require us to undertake some additional flow measurements post block removal to reconfirm the relationship between river height and river flow. In the period while this occurs the BOM may have difficulty issuing meaningful flood warnings. As the block removal will improve safety for boat operators we are prepared to agree, albeit reluctantly, with your proposal to remove these blocks.

“There is some infrastructure fixed in the river associated with the flow measuring equipment. This includes a number of water level boards and a submerged gas (compressed air) line. This infrastructure is located in the river immediately in front of the pump house. Please make every effort to avoid interfering with this equipment during the block removal. We are prepared to have someone on site during the works to reduce the risk of any damage occurring to this equipment.

“It is also important that we know in advance the date when these will be removed so we can advise our data users of the change in river flow conditions on this date.

“Provided a request is made with sufficient notice we may be able to arrange for a period of low discharge for the Poatina power station for the day the works take place.”

6.5 MARINE AND SAFETY TASMANIA (MAST)

In November 2012 Council’s wrote to MAST as follows:

“At a recent meeting of Council, a recommendation from the Cressy Local District Committee for a formal application to be submitted to MAST for the re-instatement of the boat ramp at Cressy was endorsed.

“The need for a boat ramp at Cressy is strongly supported by the local community with their passion for fishing being displayed by their on-going commitment towards the annual Tasmanian Trout

Expo and in particular it would assist the increasing number of boating enthusiasts who wish to access this section of the Macquarie River.

“For your information, the future of the weir at Cressy is being assessed and its possible removal will no doubt improve general safety for boat owners.

“Please note that your Mr Peter Hopkins has inspected the boat ramp site (end of Macquarie St) and I ask that you liaise with him about the matter.

“Your favourable consideration to fund this proposal is sought and if you require any further information, please contact me.”

On 18 December 2012 Peter Hopkins, MAST’s Manager for Recreational Boating provided the following response to Council’s request:

“... MAST has looked at the site previously with Mr Jonathan Galbraith from Council and advice given to him was that MAST does not consider the site suitable for a ramp.

“The river also has the tendency to be reasonably shallow at certain times of the year which would create dangerous navigational issues.

“MAST advises that funding for a ramp cannot be considered.”

6.6 MR BASSETT, CRESSY

Following a meeting held with Mr Bassett, Cr Goss, Mr Wilson and Mr McCullagh at the Cressy Pumphouse on 8 August 2013, Mr Bassett wrote to Council and raised a number of issues relating to the proposal to establish a boat ramp in the vicinity of the pumphouse, including the following:

“Parking:

What measures are to be undertaken to ensure orderly, legal parking.

“Shore Based Anglers

What thought has been given to the wellbeing and rights of shore based anglers who are encouraged to fish at Cressy? How is their right to an exclusion zone from boats to be protected?

“General

Is there to be any controls over boaters and by whom in regard to speeds, activities such as skiing and wakeboarding, size of boats, etc.? ...

There are two boat ramps giving access to the local river system 15km from Cressy. Is it necessary to duplicate facilities?”

7 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

In regard to public safety, cognisance should be taken

- a) *of the opinion of Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) is that the tendency to be reasonably shallow at certain times of the year which would create dangerous navigational issues and further that they would not consider funding a boat ramp.*
- b) *the risk assessment conducted by Mr Cookson.*

The overwhelming opinion of the various authorities is that the removal of the weir would require the relocation and re-calibration of considerable infrastructure assets housed at this location belonging to other agencies. It should be noted that the removal of the concrete blocks will have an effect on the accuracy of flood warnings provided by the Bureau of Meteorology, and they have advised that "the Bureau will require a period of time to adjust the hydrological models and early warning systems to the new conditions of the river, and during that period of time unfortunately our flood predictions at Longford will likely under perform".

Direction is sought from Council as to whether to pursue the establishment of a boat ramp and removal of the concrete blocks at Macquarie Street, Cressy.

It should be noted that, in the event that Council wish to proceed with the construction of a boat ramp at Cressy, Council would need to:

- a) *gain the support of the Inland Fisheries Service (IFS), Bureau of Meteorology, Hydro Tasmania and Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST); all of whom have previously not been in favour of the project;*
- b) *gain the approval of:*
 - i) *TasWater, the owner of the Weir and*
 - ii) *Mr George Mills owner of part of the land, to remove the weir;*
- c) *prior to removal of the weir Council would need to further consider the safety issues and engage Mr David Cookson to undertake a further Risk Assessment.*
- d) *plans would be drawn up to obtain quotes for the construction of the boat ramp once the weir had been removed and the water level lowered.*

8 ATTACHMENTS

8.1 Risk Assessment.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That the matter be discussed.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That Council officer's do / do not pursue the establishment of a boat ramp and removal of the concrete blocks from the river at Macquarie Street, Cressy.

DECISION

Cr Goss/Cr Brooks

That the matter be discussed.

Carried unanimously

Deputy Mayor Downie/Cr Lambert

That Council officer's investigate the establishment of a boat ramp, with the retention of the concrete blocks, at Macquarie Street, Cressy.

Carried unanimously

POSITION OF COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** that it be recommended to Council that a boat ramp be constructed at Cressy to a minimum safe standard.

Matter to be further discussed at the February meeting.

5.2 Proposed Skate Park at Cressy

The following note about a proposed skate park at Cressy was prepared by Council's Youth Officer and was expected to be included as part of the November Council agenda.

For some reason it was omitted however the Committee are invited to provide a direction to Council re future action in this matter:-

"In regard to Cressy, at this stage, the indications are that the real number of regular users of a skate facility would probably not exceed that at Westbury, or any other small centre. That would mean around 10-15 regular users, with greater numbers on special activity days.

If that is correct, the outlay on a facility of \$65000 to \$80,000 would not be considered good value for money. If Council's contribution was to be similar to that made towards the Campbell Town skate park, it would need to be considered against the background of probable number of users of the facility."

It was **RESOLVED** that the idea of constructing a skate park at Cressy not be proceeded at this stage.

5.2 Painting of Power Poles—Main St, Cressy

Mr Chellis referred to various OH&S concerns that needed to be considered.

Matter to be discussed at the February meeting.

5.3 2013/2014 Works Issues

Council's Works & Infrastructure Manager provide an update about each matter:-

Issue	Comment
Telstra Pits	Consultation with Telstra ongoing
Gates at R Ground	Work undertaken
Large flower pots	Cr Goss to liaise with Mr Chellis –discuss at next meeting
Trout sculpture	Mtce to be done
Maintenance issues—Cressy Main Rd	Work undertaken
Childrens play equipment	Work undertaken

5.4 Cressy History Project

Mrs Cox mentioned that she had been informed that the application for a grant from the Tas Community Fund was unsuccessful.

Mr Harwood mentioned that Council's Acting General Manager, Miss Bricknell has suggested that to ensure the project was established, the mural and the purchase of a TV may be considered for funding by Council and that the Hall Committee could be invited to fund the cost to install the TV unit.

It was suggested that Mrs Cox liaise with Miss Bricknell about the project.

6 OTHER BUSINESS

General issues discussed included:-

- Re-instatement of picnic table where gazebo located

- White line needed in King St (at first bend)

- Future of tree outside 138 Main St under review—possible traffic hazard
- Images circulated by Mrs Howard of various information signs/shelters (structures in Sth Aust)

- Northern boundary fence at the Cressy pool—frontage to Memorial Reserve—non colorbond section to be inspected re possible replacement

- Township of Cressy needs to be included re use of CCTV cameras

- Need for operating instructions for barbecue to be provided and placed on display for users—water supply also needs to be connected.

Mr Harwood advised that he had informed Council of his intention to retire on Tuesday 18 February 2014. Mrs Cox on behalf of the Committee expressed

appreciation to Mr Harwood for assistance and contribution into the various matters considered by the Cressy Local District Committee.

Mrs Cox wished members a Happy & Safe Christmas.

7 CLOSURE & NEXT MEETING

The Chairperson closed the meeting at 8.20 pm.

Next meeting to be held on Wednesday, 26 February 2014 commencing at 7.00pm.